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## UPCOMING STATE COMMISSION MEETINGS

- June 15** – Kings County  
**July 20** – San Francisco  
**August** – No meeting will be held  
**Sept. 21** – Ventura County

## Public Forums on State Commission's Objectives and Priorities for Program Funding

The California Children and Families Commission has begun hosting public forums to gather input on the State Commission's objectives and priorities. Objectives and priorities will be the framework for the State Commission's next funding process.

A draft version of the objectives and priorities is available on the State Commission's website at [www.ccfc.ca.gov](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov). This version will be used as a foundation for discussion at the forums, but is expected to change as a result of public input and other considerations.

Forum discussion will be focused on:

- **Improved Family Functioning: Strong Families**
- **Improved Child Development: Children Learning and Ready for School**

- **Improved Child Health: Healthy Children**

- **Recommendations for system improvement**

- **Other State Commission responsibilities (e.g. technical assistance, media campaign and public education and outreach efforts, research and development issues, and policy issues to be considered)**

**A draft version  
of the objectives and  
priorities is available on  
the State Commission's  
website at  
[www.ccfc.ca.gov](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov).**

The remaining forum is scheduled for June 14 in Fresno. Check the State Commission's website for locations and times. In addition to the public forums, comments can be submitted in writing until June 14, 2000 to the California Children and Families Commission; 501 J Street, Suite 530; Sacramento, CA 95814.



# HIGHLIGHT

## COUNTY COMMISSION HIGHLIGHT

### Kings County

Counties across the state are in the final stages of strategic planning for Prop. 10 funding. As one of the first of California's small counties to complete a plan, Kings County was chosen as this month's highlight.

Kings County began the strategic planning process by setting a firm but viable timeframe, enabling it to proceed in a quick yet thorough manner. The Commission's ultimate goal was a flexible, creative plan that included substantive input from as much of the population as possible.

#### Public Input Meetings

In planning their public input meetings, the Commission recognized their challenge as reaching out to a diverse population in a rural landscape, where many residents face severe poverty. To meet the unique needs of their population and increase turnout at the public meetings, the Commission drew on the strengths of individuals in each community. Residents were hired as translators, community members were hired to prepare meals and child care was provided by residents who were retained by the Commission. By offering residents a stake in the meetings and a share of the planning funds, the Commission was able to mobilize many hard-to-reach audiences. For example, those offering translation invited their family, friends and co-workers to participate in meetings – an extremely effective tactic in this rural area.

Kings employed additional grassroots strategies appropriate to its population to raise awareness of the meetings:

- **Speakers bureau** – The Commission sent representatives to businesses and CBOs to educate them about Prop. 10 and encourage them to mobilize their constituencies.
- **Community links** – The Commission identified and worked with influential individuals in each community to help publicize meetings.

- **Flyers and bulletin boards** – CBOs and influentials distributed flyers to friends and co-workers, and announcements were placed in Laundromats, stores and other community meeting places.
- **Leveraging attendance from other events** – By holding its public meetings immediately following other organizations' established meetings, the Commission increased turnout.

At each of the Commission's nine public input meetings, residents elected one community member to represent them at an intensive, one-day planning session.

#### Strategic Planning Session

Public input meetings were completed in December 1999, and the intensive planning session, to be attended by the County Commissioners, 12 key service providers and those community members selected by their peers, was scheduled for January. A month prior to the session, Commission staff compiled research, statistics and other information on the focus areas for distribution to each participant. Participants reviewed the materials in preparation for the meeting.

The day of the session, participants were divided equally into groups representing the three focus areas. Each small group developed goals, objectives and strategies for their focus area, and at the end of the day, ideas were presented to the large group. The County Commission then reviewed the input and synthesized the information into a

comprehensive, integrated strategic plan, which was submitted to the State Commission on Feb. 18, 2000.

"We felt it was important to finish our strategic plan quickly so that Prop. 10 funds could be allocated as soon as possible," said Dorinda Ohnstad, Kings County Children and Families Commission Program Administrator. "By setting a timeline and working hard to meet our deadlines, we were able to reach our goals."

Log on to [www.kcchildrenandfamilies.org](http://www.kcchildrenandfamilies.org) for more information on the Kings County Strategic Plan.



*Four-year-olds mail the Kings County Children and Families Commission's final strategic plan to the State Commission on Feb. 18*

The Commission Update newsletter regularly highlights the activities of County Commissions. So that we may highlight your successes, email Nicole Kasabian at [nkasabian@ccfc.ca.gov](mailto:nkasabian@ccfc.ca.gov) and let us know what your Commission has been doing.

## ■ Study Examines Tobacco's Toll on Families, Children and Society

A new report from UC Davis examines the burden placed on children, taxpayers and society by the loss of a parent to smoking-related diseases. Due to Prop. 10's emphasis on anti-tobacco issues, this groundbreaking study may be of significant interest to County Commissions.

As reported in the May issue of *Preventive Medicine*, researchers found:

- **As of 1994, there were 220,000 fatherless and 86,000 motherless children under age 18 who had lost a parent to cancer, stroke, heart or lung disease or injury attributable to smoking.**
- **In 1994 alone, an estimated 44,000 men and 19,000 women of child-rearing ages (15-54 years) died from smoking-attributable illnesses in the U.S. These deaths resulted in approximately 31,000 children left fatherless and 12,000 children left motherless.**
- **In 1994, U.S. taxpayers contributed about \$1.8 billion in Social Security Survivors Insurance payments to dependent children who lost a parent to a smoking-attributable disease.**

"It shows that there are an awful lot of kids in the U.S. who are missing their moms and dads due to smoking and there are an awful lot of taxpayers paying billions of dollars not as a result of their own smoking but because of the deaths of these other smokers," said the study's author, Bruce Leistikow,



M.D., M.S., assistant professor of epidemiology and preventive medicine at UC Davis Health System.

In the end, the toll of the death of a parent to smoking-related disease – particularly on children – may be inestimable. Studies show that up to 40 percent of bereft children show emotional disturbances a year after the death of a parent. Over the long term, such children may have a fivefold increase in childhood psychiatric disorder. Studies also suggest that adults who lost a parent in childhood are more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, attempted suicide and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Adds Leistikow, "The impact on society is equally great in terms of lost potential and productivity, as youths forgo education to care for a dying parent and have hopes forestalled by the experience of premature death."

Twenty-five percent of continuing smokers die during child rearing years. In the U.S., tobacco kills more than 400,000 people every year.

The report strongly encourages a decrease in smoking to reduce these deaths, bereavements and taxpayer and societal costs. "As a society, we need to take measures to further quantify, treat and prevent the myriad of losses associated with smoking," concludes Leistikow.

## ■ Safe from the Start Regional Forums to Come

At the Safe from the Start symposium, held in Los Angeles on May 17, California engaged in the first phase of dialogue regarding the effects of violence on young children. Sponsored by the California Children and Families Commission and other organizations, Safe from the Start brought together leaders in early childhood development, public safety, criminal justice, social services and physical and mental health to discuss the unique needs of children exposed to violence in their homes and communities.

To continue the momentum created by the May symposium and to translate new findings about the impact of violence on young children into tangible action at the local level, six regional Safe from the Start forums are planned for this calendar year. Forums will include a discussion of "promising practices" – case studies of prevention and intervention strategies that have been successful in other

communities. In addition, State Attorney General Bill Lockyer's office will assist participants in developing solutions and strategies tailored to their communities' needs.

The ultimate goal of the forums is to help communities build strong interdisciplinary teams – police officers, early childhood educators, social service providers, health and mental health professionals and others who work together to coordinate services and treatment for child victims or witnesses of violence.

County Commissioners and staff are encouraged to participate in regional forums to share their unique insight into the needs of children ages zero to five.

Sites selected for the six regional forums may include the Northern Coastal/Rural Area, the Bay Area, North Central Valley, South Central Valley, the Los Angeles Region, the

## ■ Pilot Program to Test Kit for New Parents

The State Commission is launching a pilot program with several counties to test distribution strategies for the Kit for New Parents, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the Kit's content.

The Kit for New Parents is designed to reach expectant parents and primary caregivers of newborns with important, easy-to-understand information on early childhood development. Produced in English and Spanish, the Kit will be comprised of a parent's resource guide developed by UC Berkeley, a series of videos on parenting and other informational materials.

The State Commission will work with the County Commission Executive Directors group to develop a selection criterion for counties to participate in the pilot program. Tentatively scheduled for summer and fall 2000, the pilot program will test several distribution strategies with a goal of reaching every parent or guardian of a newborn.



**The State Commission expects to launch statewide distribution of the Kit for New Parents in late 2000 or early 2001.**

In addition, on April 13, County Commissions received a survey designed to assist the State Commission in developing an effective distribution strategy.

Distribution strategies proposed in the survey included:

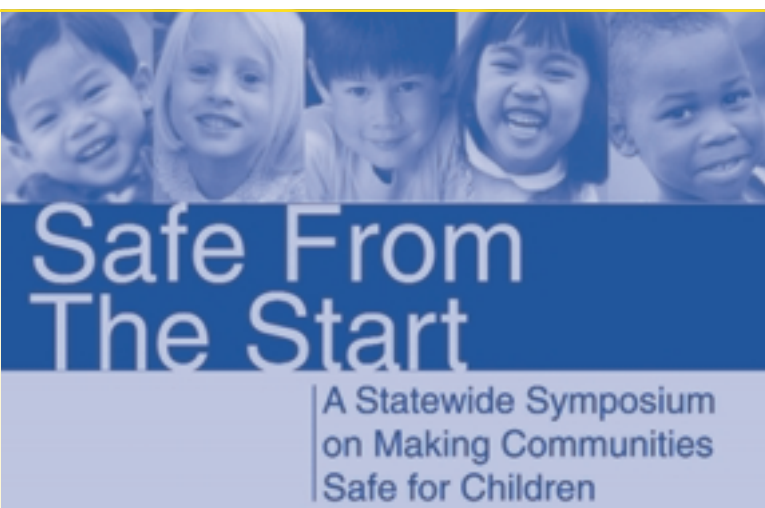
- **The State Commission distributes the Kit for New Parents through a centralized site**
- **County Commissions distribute the Kits**
- **The State Commission distributes the Kits in tandem with the County Commissions' individual distribution plans**

Based on input from the County Commissions and the results of the pilot program, the State Commission expects to launch statewide distribution of the Kit for New Parents in late 2000 or early 2001.

## ■ New Spot Added to the Prop. 10 Public Education Campaign in April

The State Commission is pleased to announce that a new television ad, produced in both English and Spanish, has been added to the Prop. 10 public education campaign. Focused on the importance of early childhood development, the new spot has been rotated into the existing campaign, which began running on Jan. 24, 2000.

Entitled "Firsts," the spot features a young child reading a poem to a caregiver, emphasizing the importance of their relationship. Viewers are encouraged to call the State's toll-free hotline – 1 (800) KIDS-025 – for more information about making the most of a child's early years.



Inland Empire and the San Diego Region. Additional information about the regional forums will be shared with County Commissions as it becomes available.

# UPDATE

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

### Media Relations and Community Outreach Assistance Available

One of the goals of Prop. 10 is to educate the public about the importance of early childhood development. Working with the media or conducting community-level public education activities can be effective in raising the value placed on a child's early years, informing the public about Prop. 10 activities and encouraging attendance at public input meetings. This type of outreach can be an extremely cost-effective and impactful way for County Commissions to reach their residents.

County Commissions interested in strategic counsel and technical assistance for media relations activities are encouraged to contact the State Commission's Communications Department. The Communications Department has already helped dozens of counties educate the media and the public about local Prop. 10 activities. Services offered include helping County Commissions:

- **Develop an overall media and public outreach plan**
- **Gain media interest in and coverage of the public participation processes**
- **Drive attendance to public meetings**
- **Launch the strategic plan**
- **Plan media events and press conferences**
- **Create press materials and brochures**
- **Prepare spokespeople for interviews**
- **Handle unexpected reporter calls**
- **Secure State Commission media materials for inclusion in County Commission press kits**

To access technical assistance, contact Nicole Kasabian, Assistant Director for Communications, at (916) 323-2542 or via email at [nkasabian@ccfc.ca.gov](mailto:nkasabian@ccfc.ca.gov), or Kristina Parham, Deputy Director for Communications, at (310) 205-2780.

**The Prop. 10 Technical Assistance Center, providing services in all 58 counties, offers consulting services, education and training workshops and resource materials to assist County Commissions with the planning and implementation of the California Children and Families Act. A project of the California Center for Health Improvement, the TA Center and courtesy consulting services are funded by generous grants from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and The California Endowment.**

### CLEARINGHOUSE

The TA Clearinghouse hosts several new publications of interest to County Commissions. New online ([www.ccfc.ca.gov](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov)) from the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities:

- **Early Childhood Dental Carries by Lawrence Platt, M.D., M.P.H. and Maritza Cabezas, D.D.S., M.P.H.**
- **Results Accountability for Prop. 10 Commissions by Mark Freidman**  
Newly available, hard copy only (at (916) 448-4838), are:
- **Family Resource Centers: Vehicles for Change by the California Family Resource Center Learning Circle, California Department of Social Services - Office of Child Abuse Prevention**
- **Homevisiting: Reaching Babies and Families Where They Live by Zero to Three**
- **Executive Summary of California Safe and Healthy Families Model Program: A Family Support Home Visiting Model by the California Department of Social Services, San Diego State University, Children's Hospital San Diego**

### JUNE CONFERENCE CALLS

- June 9** – Collaboration — Lessons Learned  
Special Guest, Carolyn Kroll  
*North Carolina Smart Start*
- July 30** – Smoking and Tobacco Cessation,  
Promising and Effective Practices

Times and conference call phone numbers to be announced.



# UPDATE

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION



California Commission Update is the monthly newsletter of the California Children and Families Commission. To offer ideas for future editions, call Nicole Kasabian, Assistant Director for Communications, at (916) 323-2542.



## ■ New Look and Distribution Plan for Commission Update

The State Commission is pleased to debut the new look for the "Commission Update" newsletter, which incorporates the new California Children and Families Commission logo.

Another change for the newsletter is also in the works – within the next few months, newsletters will be mailed to each County Commissioner individually. County contacts, who have been receiving several copies of the newsletter for distribution to the Commissioners, will receive instead a single copy of the newsletter.

If you are a Commission staff member (but not a County Commissioner or the main county contact) and would like to receive copies of the newsletter after the transition takes place, please contact Alissa Lund at Rogers & Associates, (310) 552-6922, x149, or via email at [alund@rogersassoc.com](mailto:alund@rogersassoc.com).



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